

# Manhattan Arts

# ART IN THE 1990'S

LISA PHILLIPS  
SPEAKS OUT:

INTERVIEW BY  
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MANHATTAN ARTS PRESENTS ARTISTS IN THE 1990'S: JOAN ARBEITER ● VIOLET BAXTER ●  
NANCY BLAIR ● MICHAEL BLICK ● AILENE FIELDS ● JOAN GIORDANO ● VLADIAN HOGEA ●  
DOROTHY JIJI ● MARY FRANCES JUDGE ● SUE KUTOSH ● MARK MILLER ● BEVERLY NOBLE  
● ELIZABETH OLIVELLA ● OUDI ● RANDOLPH LEE ● GALE SASSON ● YVETTE M. SIKORSKY  
● DON SLOAN ● NATASHA TUBELSKAYA ● ANTHONY R. WHELIHAN ● PATRICIA WINSON



Fran Lew. *Barbara Greer*, detail, oil portrait.

**FRAN LEW**  
Pen and Brush Club

Judging from **Fran Lew's** small but choice exhibition recently at the *Pen & Brush Club*, this Westchester artist (represented by *Grand Central Art Galleries*) is at the top of her form. Lew is not only adept at catching the likeness of her sitters, in many styles, but is equally proficient at digging deep beneath their skin, often revealing their innermost feelings. Though Lew frequently works from photographs alone—many of her commissions are of the dearly departed—working from live models is her great love and, I might add, her forte.

In her portrait of *Leslie*, a large (27" x 34") oil, Lew catches the personality of a very determined sitter whose sole thought seems to be that of continuing whatever she was doing before the artist arrived. In Lew's portrait of *Barbara Greer* the award-winning artist really shows her "medals." Using John Singer Sargent look-a-like brushstrokes, Greer—along with the flowers and fabric that surround her—is brought both beautifully and warmly alive. The painting's yellow pastel background is particularly breathtaking.

I am in total agreement with Mario Cuomo who said, after Fran Lew painted his wife's portrait (which now hangs at the Governor's Mansion in Albany), "I never thought Matilda's gentleness and warmth could be captured by the brush. Fran Lew's painting is superb."

*Grand Central Art Galleries*  
24 West 57 Street  
(212) 867-3344

—Edward Rubin

**SISKIND FROM THE COLLECTION**  
Museum of Modern Art

**Aaron Siskind** made his mark in the world of photography via his 1930s documentaries of New York neighborhoods. The following decade, however, he altered course; in tranquil Martha's Vineyard he had found a "purity and vitality of . . . pictorial structure" that had up to then eluded him—in Nature's microcosm. Thereafter, he focussed upon abstractions in reality—closeups of walls, paint peels, rock formations, posters.

MOMA's retrospective through October 10th, traces Siskind's long career in but 31 prints. Discipline, integrity, taut composition is his forte: "When I make a photograph, I want it to be . . . a new object, complete and self-contained, whose basic condition is order—unlike the world of events and actions whose permanent condition is change and disorder." Compact, comprehensive, the MOMA exhibit eloquently affirms the validity of Siskind's beliefs.

*Museum of Modern Art*  
11 West 53rd Street  
(212) 708-9480

—Bruce A. Silberblatt

**INVENTION AND CONTINUITY IN CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS**

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Concurrent with—and complementary to—MOMA, the *Met* unveils photography as art, but transports it from where Siskind evolved to remote horizons. Unlike Siskind, those whose creations appear here manipulate their medium. Three techniques are presented through October 8th.

"Repetition and Fragments" is exemplified in **Ray Metzker's** mind-boggling photomosaic "Port Authority." In a differing vein, "Fictions and Illusions," the camera conjures that which they eye itself cannot perceive: the poignant *Death Comes to the Old Lady* by **Duane Michals**; **Francois Deschamps's** dramatic *Rope Pull*.

The last—"Images From Images"—probes perilous territory. Is this device photography as art—**John Baldessari's** *Soul: Rare View*—or merely photography of art—*Cupid and Psyche* by **Calum Colvin**? The *Met* poses this provoking question: the discerning viewer must furnish its answer.

*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*  
5th Avenue at 82nd Street  
(212) 879-5500

—Bruce A. Silberblatt



John Baldessari, *Soul: Rare View*, 1986, gelatin silver prints with applied color, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase John B. Turner Fund and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, 1986.